

PROBLEM OF FORMOSA

by

William T. Stone

	PAGE
DIMENSIONS OF CONFLICT OVER FORMOSA	119
United States Stand on Defense of Pacific Islands	119
Efforts by United Nations to Arrange a Cease-Fire	121
Negotiations at World Capitals for Settlement	122
STRATEGIC, POLITICAL, LEGAL ASPECTS OF PROBLEM	122
Strategic Importance of Formosa and Pescadores	123
Offshore Islands and the Western Defense Line	125
Differing Status of Formosa and Coastal Islands	127
United States Defense Commitments in Strait Area	128
Extent of Western and Communist Treaty Obligations	131
SEARCH FOR INTERIM AND FINAL SOLUTIONS	133
Current Maneuvering for an Unwritten Truce	133
Efforts to Stabilize Situation in Strait Area	133
Two China Proposal for Formosa Settlement	135

Feb. 16
1955



PROBLEM OF FORMOSA

THE FORMOSA CONTROVERSY, simmering since the Chinese Communists drove the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek from the China mainland more than five years ago, rose to crisis proportions in mid-January when Red forces stepped up air and artillery attacks against Nationalist-held offshore islands. Although sporadic harassment of the sort had been going on for several months, threats of the Peiping regime to "liberate" Formosa were assuming new force and substance. The United States, on record against any Red invasion of Formosa since the start of the Korean war, responded by reiterating its firm intention to oppose by force any Communist assault from the mainland.

Peiping's sharp rebuff of United Nations efforts to arrange a cease-fire added to the growing tension and to fears of a general war. To the Chinese Communists the United States was aggressively intervening in what was "entirely a matter of China's internal affairs." But in placing the question before the U.N. Security Council, the New Zealand representative had made plain the international character of the conflict. "There are here involved," Sir Leslie Knox Munro said, "two governing authorities, each claiming the same territory, each disposing of powerful forces, and each in alliance with one of the most powerful countries in the world."

AMERICAN STAND ON DEFENSE OF PACIFIC ISLANDS

President Eisenhower gave warning in a special message to Congress on Jan. 24 that a situation was developing in the Formosa Strait that seriously imperiled world peace and American security.¹ "Communist China," the President explained, "has pursued a series of provocative political and military actions, establishing a pattern of aggressive pur-

¹ Moscow Radio agreed, in a special broadcast, Feb. 12, that "The situation which has arisen threatens the maintenance of peace and intensifies the danger of a new war."

Editorial Research Reports

pose. That purpose, they proclaim, is the conquest of Formosa." Eisenhower emphasized that it was "important that these islands [Formosa and the Pescadores] should remain in friendly hands." In unfriendly hands they would create "a breach in the island chain of the Western Pacific that constitutes for the United States and for other free nations the geographical backbone of their security structure in that ocean."

Accordingly, "the United States must remove any doubt regarding our readiness to fight, if necessary, to preserve the vital stake of the free world in a free Formosa, and to engage in whatever operations may be required to carry out that purpose." To that end, Eisenhower recommended two courses of action.

The first called for adoption by Congress of a joint resolution authorizing the President to employ the armed forces of the United States "as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack." The authority was to include "the securing and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands and the taking of such other measures as he [the President] judges to be required or appropriate."

The second course proposed by the President looked to United Nations action to bring about a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait. The President told Congress he would "welcome action by the United Nations" to find a peaceful solution, and he instructed the American representative on the Security Council, former Sen. Lodge, to support moves for a cease-fire.

Congress acted quickly to grant the requested authority to use the armed forces to protect Formosa and the Pescadores. The House approved the Formosa policy resolution, as drafted by the administration, on Jan. 25 by a vote of 410 to 3. The Senate after three days of debate sent the measure to the White House without change on Jan. 28 by a vote of 85 to 3.

During the debate a number of senators who voted for the extraordinary grant of authority voiced concern over the far-reaching implications of the resolution. Sen. Byrd (D-Va.) said the President's request and the action of Congress were "unprecedented in American history." Sens. Smith (R-Me.) and Long (D-La.) were joined by others in

Problem of Formosa

terming the resolution "a predated declaration of war." Sens. Morse (Ind-Ore.) and Lehman (D-N. Y.), speaking in opposition, voiced fear that Congress was authorizing a preventive war on the mainland of China.

UNITED NATIONS EFFORTS TO ARRANGE CEASE-FIRE

The U.N. Security Council met on Jan. 31, at the request of New Zealand, to take up the cease-fire question. Three decisive votes were taken on that day. The Council (1) voted 9 to 1, with the Soviet Union opposed and Nationalist China abstaining, to consider the coastal fighting as a "situation threatening international peace and security"; (2) voted 9 to 1, with Nationalist China opposed and the Soviet Union abstaining, to invite representatives of Communist China to take part in the debate; and (3) voted 10 to 1, with Nationalist China opposed, to accept as a second agenda item a Soviet resolution charging the United States with "intervention in the internal affairs of China" and requesting the Security Council to end "acts of aggression" against Communist China.

The invitation to Red China was transmitted immediately by U.N. Secretary General Hammarskjöld. The reply from Peiping, received Feb. 3, turned down the Council's invitation to discuss a cease-fire in the coastal islands and denounced United States "intervention" in terms similar to those employed by Russia. The reply, signed by Premier Chou En-lai, demanded as a condition for sending a representative to New York that the representative of Nationalist China be "driven from the Security Council" and that the Soviet resolution condemning the "aggression of the United States" be taken up by that body.

Peiping's terms were unacceptable to the Security Council. After a ten-day interval, the Council, meeting for a second time on Feb. 14, declined to accept Red China's conditions for participation in U.N. cease-fire efforts, and rejected by a vote of 10 to 1 a Soviet move for immediate consideration of the Russian resolution condemning alleged United States aggression against China. The Soviet delegate, Arkady Sobolev, then told the Council that its failure to act on either the New Zealand resolution or the Soviet proposal meant that the United Nations had decided to "do nothing."

The majority of the Council denied a do-nothing policy

Editorial Research Reports

and supported Britain's delegate, Sir Pierson Dixon, who urged that it suspend public efforts to achieve a cease-fire in order to allow time for private consultation by the interested governments. This the Council did without a vote, leaving it up to the President of the Council to call a new meeting if and when developments warranted.

NEGOTIATIONS AT WORLD CAPITALS FOR SETTLEMENT

During the interval between Red China's first rebuff to the United Nations and the adjournment of the Security Council on Feb. 14, various diplomatic moves had been launched in London, Moscow and other world capitals. Great Britain in particular, striving to keep the doors open for diplomacy, had been in contact with the Soviet Union through its ambassador in Moscow both before and after the upheaval in the Kremlin, Feb. 8, that put Marshal Bulganin in the seat of Malenkov as Soviet premier. From these contacts, the British government believed that Russia was anxious to achieve at least a *de facto* cease-fire, despite bellicose speeches by Molotov and Bulganin at the time of Malenkov's fall from power.

Hopes for an unwritten truce were encouraged, moreover, by the evacuation of Chinese Nationalist troops from the Tachen islands without incident. It was noted that only isolated shots at straying aircraft were fired as the United States 7th Fleet assisted in the evacuation, and that private talks looking to a settlement were continuing on both sides.

Strategic, Political, Legal Aspects of Problem

FORMOSA, called Taiwan in the Orient, is a link in the chain of islands stretching from eastern Siberia to the Malay Peninsula and screening the mainland of Asia from the Western Pacific. The island of Formosa is 240 miles long and from 60 to 80 miles wide, with an area of some 14,000 square miles—about equal to the combined area of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Its prewar population was about six million; today it has more than eight and one-half million inhabitants, including the 400,000-man Nationalist army.

Problem of Formosa

The topography of Formosa makes it a natural fortress. About two-thirds of the land area is mountainous, with more than 75 peaks approaching or exceeding 10,000 feet. The rugged east coast is sparsely populated and has only two natural harbors. Most of the populated land is on the western slopes and along the fertile coastal plain. The shore bordering the Formosa Strait is flat, but the sea is so shallow that ocean vessels cannot approach, except at a few river mouths where tortuous channels make navigation hazardous. The Pescadores are a cluster of low, windswept islands with an area of some 75 square miles, lying 30 miles west of Formosa. They hold the only deep-water anchorage for warships guarding the west side of the main island.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF FORMOSA AND PESCADORES

Formosa and the Pescadores, situated between Japan and the Philippines, occupy a strategic position of high importance. The northern tip of Formosa is 350 miles southwest of Okinawa. The southernmost point of Formosa is 230 miles from the northern shores of Luzon in the Philippines. The Formosa Strait, which separates the island from the China coast, is more than 250 miles long and from approximately 100 to 150 miles wide; it forms a part of the sea approaches to the mainland ports of Amoy and Foochow, which are roughly midway between Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Military estimates of the strategic value of Formosa and the Pescadores have varied under the changing conditions of modern warfare. The Japanese maintained a small naval station in the Pescadores during their 50-year occupation of Formosa, but they did not establish major military bases there until World War II. Following the surrender of Japan, the United States recognized the importance of having Formosa in friendly hands, but it did not include the area within its "strategic defense perimeter" until the Korean War broke out in 1950.²

American strategic estimates—and United States policy toward Formosa — underwent profound changes between January and June of 1950. On Jan. 5 President Truman by implication had placed Formosa outside this country's defense perimeter by announcing that the United States had no intention of intervening in the Chinese civil con-

² See "Formosa Policy," *E.R.R.*, Vol. II 1950, pp. 577-580.

Editorial Research Reports

flict and would not "provide military aid or advice to Chinese [Nationalist] forces on Formosa." A week later Secretary of State Acheson specifically defined the American defense line in the Pacific as running "from the Aleutians to Japan, thence to the Ryukyus [Okinawa] and the Philippines." Acheson presumably reflected views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when he added that "So far as other areas of the Pacific are concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against attack."³

A sharp change in American policy toward defense of Formosa was announced on June 27, 1950, two days after the Communist attack on the Republic of Korea. Truman, after calling on the United Nations for collective measures to resist aggression in Korea, issued a unilateral declaration regarding Formosa:

In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to the United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area. Accordingly, I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action, I am calling upon the Chinese government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done.

The "neutralization" order remained in force until February 1953. Meanwhile, during the last two years of the Truman administration, the determination of the United States to prevent Formosa from falling into Chinese Communist hands was reflected in growing American support of the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.

President Eisenhower enunciated a broader strategic concept in his first State of the Union message on Feb. 2, 1953. The new President "deneutralized" Formosa by announcing that the 7th Fleet would "no longer be employed to shield Communist China." The new order, he said, implied "no aggressive intent on our part" but, with Communist China fighting U.N. forces in Korea, there was "no longer any logic or sense in a condition that requires the United States Navy to assume defensive responsibilities" on behalf of the Communists.

No public reference to the Nationalist-held offshore islands was made in either Truman's original order to the

³ Acheson's speech to the National Press Club on Jan. 12, 1950, made it clear that should such an attack occur, "the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it, and then upon the commitments of the entire civilized world under the Charter of the United Nations." This passage was understood at the time to refer primarily to Korea.

Problem of Formosa

7th Fleet or in Eisenhower's deneutralization order of February 1953. Both statements mentioned Formosa specifically, and both by implication covered the area of Formosa Strait embracing the Pescadores.⁴ But neither disclosed whether, or to what extent, the United States felt committed to defend the numerous small Nationalist islands a few miles off the mainland of China.

OFFSHORE ISLANDS AND THE WESTERN DEFENSE LINE

The offshore islands are strung along a 400-mile span of the China coast extending from the Quemoy islands in the south to the Yushan islands in the north. When the Nationalists withdrew from the mainland in December 1949, they occupied and held some 30 of several hundred coastal islands covering approaches to the Formosa Strait. Not all of these were fortified and a number were lost to the Communists early in 1950. Of the islands still retained the most important were the Quemoy islands, the Matsus and Paichuans, and the Tachens.

The Quemoy islands lie directly athwart the entrance to Amoy, five miles from that Communist seaport and more than 100 miles west of the Pescadores across Formosa Strait.⁵ The Matsus and Paichuans are two groups of small islands some 20 to 25 miles east of Foochow and approximately 100 miles from the northern tip of Formosa. The Tachens are 200 miles farther north, well beyond Formosa Strait and about 20 miles off the mainland coast of Chekiang.

The Nationalists maintain that the coastal islands still in their possession are vital to the defense of Formosa and are important as outposts from which to blockade Communist ports on the mainland; some foreign observers contend, on the contrary, that the islands are a military liability. During the Korean war the Nationalists used their island positions to control coastal shipping, to stage raids on the mainland and on Communist-held islands, and to gather intelligence. They assert that the Quemoy islands and Matsus, in particular, are valuable for defensive operations in the event of a full-scale Communist attack on Formosa itself.

⁴ The Truman announcement of June 27, 1950, did not mention the Pescadores, but a State Department spokesman disclosed a month later that the original directive had included that group of islands with Formosa.

⁵ Big Quemoy is a flat 50-square-mile island reportedly manned by about 30,000 Nationalist troops. Little Quemoy and Tatan, also fortified by the Nationalists, are south of the main island and are separated from it by a mile-wide channel.

Editorial Research Reports

The Chinese Communists have been making sporadic attacks on the offshore islands ever since Chiang Kai-shek withdrew to Formosa in 1949. In September 1954 the Reds stepped up their military operations along the entire coast. The first significant action began Sept. 3, when Communist shore batteries opened artillery fire on Quemoy and followed with heavy air attacks on that Nationalist base. In November and December air strikes of mounting intensity were made against the Matsus, Paichuans, and other Nationalist islands in the northern Strait area.⁶ In mid-January the Communists moved farther north to launch air and amphibious attacks on the Tachen group. One small island (Yikiang) eight miles from the main Tachen base soon fell to the Red invaders.

The Peiping government asserted repeatedly during the so-called "vest-pocket war" that its military operations were a prelude to "liberation" of Formosa. On Jan. 24, the day President Eisenhower sent his Formosa message to Congress, Premier Chou En-lai declared that Formosa was "an inalienable part of China's territory" and that "no outside interference" could prevent its return to the Chinese people. Chou's statement, broadcast by the Peiping radio, advanced the legal contention that Formosa, the Pescadores, and all the offshore islands were "sovereign territory of the People's Republic of China," and that any attempt by the United States to prevent their return constituted "intervention in the internal affairs of China."

The United States never has conceded Red China's claim to sovereignty over any of the territories held by the Nationalist government. It recognizes the Nationalists as the legal government of the Republic of China, and has affirmed by treaty the right of the Nationalists to exercise governmental authority in Formosa and the Pescadores. On both moral and legal grounds, the United States has denied that Communist China is entitled to employ military force to gain possession of Chinese territories under the effective control of the Nationalist government. Yet some allies of the United States, and many non-Communist members of the United Nations, have differed sharply over the legal status of Formosa, and particularly the legal status of the offshore islands.

⁶ Many small islands are strung out on either side of the Matsu group, some held by the Reds, some by the Nationalists. Communist air attacks in that region were reported against Wuchiu, Nanju, Changki and Taishan.

Problem of Formosa

DIFFERING STATUS OF FORMOSA AND COASTAL ISLANDS

Title to Formosa and the Pescadores has remained in suspense since the end of World War II. Japan's claims to sovereignty over those territories have been annulled, but formal transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of China has not been confirmed by international agreement.

Only the countries of the Soviet bloc have openly backed Red China's claims to sovereignty over all island territories held by the Chinese Nationalists. Yet in dealing with the question of sovereignty, some of the non-Communist states have drawn a distinction between the legal status of Formosa and the Pescadores on the one hand, and the offshore islands on the other.

Whereas Formosa and the Pescadores had not been under Chinese rule for half a century prior to the end of World War II,⁷ the offshore territories had been everywhere regarded as an integral part of China. When Great Britain accorded diplomatic recognition to the Communist government of China in January 1950, it did not by that act formally recognize Red China's sovereignty beyond the mainland. During the last five years Britain has repeatedly affirmed Nationalist China's right to possession of Formosa and the Pescadores, as territories surrendered by Japan to the "Republic of China." But the British government, while tacitly acknowledging the Nationalists' *de facto* control over some of the offshore islands, has declined to support Chiang Kai-shek's claims to those islands.

The Churchill government made it clear during the crisis produced by Red China's attack on the Tachen island group that Britain did not assume defense commitments in the coastal islands, although it stood with the United States in seeking to keep Formosa in friendly hands and to prevent an extension of the fighting. Defending the government's position in the House of Commons on Feb. 1, Foreign Secretary Eden interpreted President Eisenhower's Jan. 24 message to Congress as limiting the defense obligations of the United States to Formosa and the Pescadores, and thus reducing the risk of a wider conflagration.⁸ Other non-Communist

⁷ Both islands were ceded to Japan by the peace treaty ending the Sino-Japanese war in 1895.

⁸ Eden told Labor opposition critics in the ensuing debate that Eisenhower had been "careful to say that he is not suggesting that the United States should enlarge its defensive obligations beyond Formosa and the Pescadores, as provided in the mutual defense treaty" with the Nationalists.

Editorial Research Reports

FACTORS BEARING ON LEGAL STATUS OF FORMOSA

The Cairo Declaration of Dec. 1, 1943, issued jointly by President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, stated it to be "the purpose of the three great allies . . . [that] all the territories Japan had stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be returned to the Republic of China."

The Potsdam Protocol of July 26, 1945, signed by President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill, concurred in by the Republic of China and later adhered to by the Soviet Union, set forth the terms of surrender offered to Japan, including a proviso that the undertakings of the Cairo Declaration would be carried out.

The Japanese Surrender Terms, accepted by Japan on Aug. 14, 1945, specified that terms of the Cairo Declaration would be executed and that Japanese sovereignty would be limited to the four main islands of Japan proper and "such minor islands" as the allies might determine.

The Occupation of Formosa in September 1945 was carried out by armed forces of the Nationalist government of China with the aid of American naval units. Administration of Formosa and the Pescadores was taken over by the Chinese without legal transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of China.

The Japanese Peace Treaty, signed at San Francisco on Sept. 8, 1951, by Japan and 48 states, contained no provision for transfer of sovereignty over Formosa and the Pescadores to the Republic of China. Earlier United States proposals for a peace settlement with Japan had contemplated a formal transfer of sovereignty by that instrument, but differences among the western allies and with the Soviet Union made it impossible to cede Formosa to either of the Chinese claimants. Neither Red China nor Nationalist China was invited to sign the treaty. Six other countries that took part in the San Francisco conference declined to sign: the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Burma, and India.*

Japan and Nationalist China signed a separate peace treaty on Apr. 28, 1952—the date on which the multilateral treaty went into force—that applied to "all the territories which are now or may hereafter be under the control . . . of the Nationalist government of China," but the instrument contained no provision for transfer of sovereignty over Formosa.

* In a note of Aug. 23, 1951, to the United States, India stated that one reason for its decision was the lack of any provision in the treaty for return of Formosa to China.

countries supporting efforts for a cease-fire in the Formosa Strait accepted Eden's interpretation of American defense commitments and made it clear that their own commitments did not extend to the offshore islands.

DEFENSE COMMITMENTS OF UNITED STATES IN STRAIT AREA

Defense commitments of the United States with respect to Formosa were defined in the Mutual Defense Treaty

Problem of Formosa

signed at Washington on Dec. 2, 1954, by Secretary of State Dulles and Foreign Minister Yeh of the National Government of the Republic of China. The treaty reaffirmed the peaceful intentions of the two countries and declared their "common determination to defend themselves against external armed attack, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that either of them stands alone in the West Pacific." Three key articles defined the obligations—and limitations—imposed by the treaty.

Art. 2. . . . The parties separately and jointly by self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack and Communist subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability. . . .

Art. 5. Each party recognizes that an armed attack in the West Pacific area directed against the territories of either . . . would be dangerous to its own peace and safety, and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes. . . .

Art. 6. For the purpose of Articles 2 and 5, the terms "territorial" and "territories" shall mean in respect of the Republic of China, Taiwan [Formosa] and the Pescadores; and in respect of the United States the island territories in the West Pacific under its jurisdiction. The provisions of Articles 2 and 5 will be applicable to such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement.

The treaty did not define the "other territories," mentioned in Art. 6, but an exchange of notes between Dulles and Yeh, dated Dec. 10, 1954, confirmed a series of understandings to the effect that use of force for the defense of Formosa and other territories would be a "matter for joint agreement." The Dulles note agreed that China possesses "the inherent right of self defense," not only with respect to Formosa, but also in "all territories now and hereafter under its effective control." However, it was stated that "such use of force will be a matter of joint agreement, subject to action of an emergency character which is clearly an exercise of the inherent right of self-defense."

On the important question of military rights and obligations in the undefined "other territories" the language of the treaty and the explanatory notes was not identical with that used in the defend-Formosa resolution of Congress. The key paragraph of the congressional resolution authorized the President:

. . . to employ the armed forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack, this authority

Editorial Research Reports

to include the securing and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands and the taking of such other measures as he judges to be required or appropriate in assuring the defense of Formosa and the Pescadores.

Divergent opinions on the nature and extent of American military commitments were voiced during a three-day Senate debate on the resolution, Jan. 26 to 28; and again during a short debate on the treaty—Feb. 8. Chairman George (D-Ga.) of the Foreign Relations Committee told the Senate on Jan. 27 that in his judgment the resolution was "an express limitation" on constitutional powers of the President as Commander-in-Chief. It limited the use of the armed forces to certain specific purposes, defined as "securing and protecting Formosa and the Pescadores" and related positions and territories "now in friendly hands." That limiting clause, George contended, excluded authority to wage "preventive war" on the Chinese mainland, or to "take, hold, and secure any area on the mainland, because it is not in friendly hands."⁹

Senate critics of the resolution interpreted it as conferring much wider authority than was conceded by the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Sen. Morse, (Ind-Ore.) linked the resolution with the pending treaty and declared that both authorized military action by armed forces of the United States on the China mainland. Morse and others contended that the resolution was "an advance declaration of war," and that the pending treaty would permit Chiang Kai-shek to commit American armed forces by exercising his own "inherent right of self-defense."

The Senate approved ratification of the Formosa defense treaty, 65 to 6,¹⁰ on Feb. 9, twelve days after the defend-Formosa resolution had been sent to the White House. Sen. Morse led an unsuccessful fight to amend the treaty by excluding any reference to the "other territories" (offshore islands) and by writing in a reservation to stipulate that the treaty did not recognize Nationalist claims to ultimate sovereignty over Formosa.

Although the Senate rejected both Morse amendments, Chairman George said certain "understandings" set forth

⁹ George upheld the President's right to take any "affirmative action" he considered necessary for the purpose of defending Formosa.

¹⁰ Voting against ratification were Langer (R-N. D.), Lehman (D-N. Y.) and Morse (Ind-Ore.) who had opposed the resolution, and Chavez (D-N. M.), Gore (D-Tenn.) and Kefauver (D-Tenn.). The Legislative Yuan of the Republic of China approved the treaty Jan. 14, 306 to 0.

Problem of Formosa

in the report of the Foreign Relations Committee had the "practical effect" of reservations. He assured the Senate that the United States adhered to the treaty subject to understandings that (1) this country would not be obligated to take military action beyond Formosa and the Pescadores unless the treaty should be amended, with consent of the Senate, specifically to include other territories; (2) approval of the treaty would neither strengthen nor weaken Nationalist China's claims to sovereignty over Formosa; (3) Chiang Kai-shek could launch no military operation to regain the mainland without prior consent of the United States.

EXTENT OF WESTERN AND EASTERN TREATY OBLIGATIONS

Throughout the discussion of American defense commitments in Asia an undercurrent of anxiety was evident in the Senate regarding the position of the principal allies of the United States in the event of a shooting war in the Formosa Strait. No critic of the treaty questioned the desirability of keeping Formosa in friendly hands, but many senators did question the world effect of any involvement of American forces in fighting on the mainland or in the coastal islands. Under such conditions, it was asked, what support would the United States be likely to receive from its allies and from other non-Communist states which are members of the United Nations? Moreover, what military obligations had the Soviet Union assumed with respect to Red China should that country become involved in war with the United States?

Apart from the general obligations of all U.N. members under Charter provisions relating to acts of aggression,¹¹ no country other than the United States has entered into any direct treaty commitment to defend Formosa or other territories held by the Nationalist government. No regional defense treaty covers the Formosa area. Nationalist China is not a party to the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, and the area covered by that pact specifically excludes Formosa.

Eight nations signed the Southeast Asia Defense Treaty at Manila on Sept. 8, 1954: Great Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand,

¹¹ Articles 44 to 51 of the U.N. Charter call for varying degrees of mutual assistance, including military measures, to states which the Security Council has declared victims of aggression.

Editorial Research Reports

and the United States. Art. 8 defines the "treaty area" as embracing the general region of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific, "not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes"—the latitude of the Batan islands north of the Philippines and 50 miles south of Formosa.¹² However, Art. 4 provides that the parties to the treaty may recognize by "unanimous agreement" that "aggression by armed attack against any state or territory [outside the treaty area] would endanger their own peace and safety." In that event, each party agrees that it will "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." Thus, if United States forces should be attacked by Red China in any movement aimed at Formosa, this country could appeal for common action, once the treaty has come into force, but it could not invoke the provisions of Art. 4 without unanimous agreement.¹³

The Soviet Union entered into an alliance with Communist China on Feb. 14, 1950, when the two countries signed a 30-year treaty of friendship and mutual aid, along with several related agreements. The mutual defense provisions constituted a binding military alliance erected as a safeguard against a renewal of hostilities by Japan or "any state which directly or indirectly would unite with Japan in acts of aggression." If either party should be attacked by Japan or any country associated with Japan, the other would "immediately render military or other aid with all the means at its disposal." The treaty further provided for close consultation between the parties on "international questions of common interest" and pledged mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the 30-year alliance, Feb. 14 this year, spokesmen for both the Soviet Union and Red China reaffirmed their binding ties of friendship. In Moscow, Premier Bulganin pledged that Soviet aid to Communist China "will be forthcoming whenever necessary." In Peiping, Mao Tse-tung made one of his rare public appearances to hail "the great cooperation between China and the Soviet Union," which he said would be strengthened still further. In a reference to existing tensions, Mao said

¹² The treaty area may be enlarged to take in the territory of any other state which may be admitted by unanimous agreement of the present signatories.

¹³ The U. S. Senate approved ratification of the Southeast Asia Defense Treaty on Feb. 1 by a vote of 82 to 1; all other signatories have ratified, with the exception of the Philippines, which is expected to act before the treaty powers meet at Bangkok on Feb. 23 to consider further measures to implement the pact.

Problem of Formosa

that "if the imperialists start a war of aggression we, together with the people of the whole world, will wipe them from the surface of the globe."

Search for Interim and Final Solutions

ATTEMPTS to deal with the Formosa situation after Red China's initial rebuff to the United Nations centered on three possibilities of further diplomatic action. The first looked to limited stabilization on the basis of an "unwritten" cease-fire under which the Chinese Communists and Nationalists would refrain from military action in the Formosa Strait or any political action likely to widen the area of conflict. The second possibility was a series of private talks, outside the U.N., in which Peiping might be induced to participate and through which concessions might be made by both sides without too serious loss of face. The third possibility, advanced by some British Commonwealth countries, called for a continuing re-appraisal of long-range alternatives, including formal recognition of the existence of "two Chinas," as the possible basis of a future settlement.

The importance of "giving diplomacy a chance to work" was stressed repeatedly by British Foreign Minister Eden and other western statesmen during the first weeks of February. Fear was expressed that an armed clash between Red China and the United States would undermine the solidarity of the countries of the free world, even to the point of endangering the alliance between this country and Great Britain. The Churchill government, which quickly supported President Eisenhower's stand on defense of Formosa and the Pescadores, faced strong Labor Party opposition on the ground that it was risking involvement in war over offshore islands that "belong to China."

EFFORTS TO STABILIZE SITUATION IN FORMOSA STRAIT

Diplomatic moves were given new impetus and encouragement by the withdrawal of Nationalist troops and civilians from the Tachen islands without drawing fire from Red China's armed forces. The evacuation, begun on Feb. 5 and completed Feb. 12, was carried out under terms of an agreement between the United States and the Nationalist

Editorial Research Reports

government that enabled the 7th Fleet to cover the operation and carry the chief burden of the withdrawal.

The Nationalist government announced, Feb. 10, that all civilians had been evacuated not only from the Tachen islands but also from the Yushans, 30 miles north of the Tachens, and from Pishan island 32 miles to the south. It added that troops from the Tachens and guerrilla forces from the Yushans were being merged with Nationalist forces on Formosa, or "redeployed" with other units at unspecified defense points.

Most American analysts seemed to agree that the Tachens and Yushans were military and political liabilities in that they could not be defended by the Nationalists against sea and air attack from Red China's bases on the mainland, except with armed support from the 7th Fleet, possibly at the risk of general war.

The possibility of success in private talks outside the U.N. was linked by the Churchill government and leading members of the British Commonwealth with the successful evacuation of the Tachens. Eden had been pressing for such a withdrawal since Jan. 26, when he said in Commons that the "first concern" of the British government was "to stop the fighting . . . and prevent a wider conflagration." A tacit cease-fire could be brought into effect, he implied, without a final settlement of the status of either the offshore islands or of Formosa and the Pescadores.

Eden did not say specifically that the United States was being urged to get Chiang Kai-shek to retire from Quemoy and the Matsus, but he made it clear that Britain had been "in close and constant touch" with Washington, and that they (the British) were convinced that the American administration also was seeking to reduce the risks of further fighting in the Formosa Strait. If that could be accomplished, larger possibilities of peaceful settlement would be opened up.

Some of the wider possibilities hinted at by Eden were explored during the conference in London, Jan. 31-Feb. 8, of British Commonwealth prime ministers. Official communiques made no reference to a possible big-power conference on the lines of the Geneva parley that brought a truce in Indo-China last July, but reports from London indicated that this had been broached by India's Nehru

Problem of Formosa

and had been laid aside as impractical under existing conditions. It was later disclosed by Moscow that Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had suggested on Feb. 4 that Britain and India attempt to persuade the United States to join in a ten-nation conference later in the month at New Delhi or Shanghai. Under the Molotov proposal, the Red Chinese would have been admitted and the Nationalists excluded from the meeting. This arrangement was not acceptable to either Great Britain or the United States and was said to have been frowned upon by most of the British Commonwealth prime ministers. Even Nehru supported the British government in refusing to consider a conference from which the Chinese Nationalists would be excluded.

While Russia could not have expected acceptance of the Molotov proposal in the form in which it was originally advanced, there has been some evidence that she is anxious to restrain the Chinese Communists from any overt act that would precipitate war, and would warmly welcome a *de facto* stabilization in the Formosa Strait. Hope was expressed in both Britain and the United States that some form of settlement could still be achieved through diplomatic negotiation.

TWO-CHINA PROPOSAL FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT

While the diplomatic sounding out was in progress in London, Moscow and Washington, the concept of "two Chinas" was frequently, though unofficially, mentioned as a possible basis for future political stabilization in Asia. No government openly suggested any plan to confirm the existence of two Chinas—one controlled by the Nationalists on Formosa and the other by the Communists on the mainland—and both Chinese regimes proclaimed their violent opposition to any such formula. At the same time, the search for some interim settlement short of war led inevitably to discussion of some kind of two-China arrangement.

In Great Britain the idea had often been brought up in connection with proposals in Commons for a form of United Nations trusteeship over Formosa. Prime Minister Churchill referred to the trusteeship idea last July 14, when he told opposition leader Clement Attlee that he saw no reason why "at some subsequent date" Formosa should not be placed

Editorial Research Reports

under custody of the United Nations. Drew Middleton reported to the *New York Times* on Feb. 8 that it was understood in London that the British government "continues to think along those lines."

The Eisenhower administration has given no encouragement to talk of a two-Chinas deal, but during debate on the Formosa defense treaty well informed senators firmly stated that the United States had not approved any military operations by Chiang Kai-shek to regain control of the Chinese mainland. After the treaty had been ratified, Sen. Kefauver (D-Tenn.) said that while it was the duty of the United States to defend Formosa and the Pescadores, "we certainly must divorce ourselves as soon as feasible from the government of Chiang Kai-shek."¹⁴ Under existing conditions, many congressional spokesmen who supported both the treaty and the joint resolution on Formosa urged a thoroughgoing reexamination of the political alternatives to unwanted war in Asia.

¹⁴ Kefauver added in a speech at Birmingham, Ala., Feb. 11, that as long as this country was looked on in Asia as the sponsor of Chiang "we will be suspect, no matter how fine our motives."



